

Fundamentals and Best Practices of Tourism Security



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Understanding what Tourism Security is:

Students of tourism surety divide the field into six component parts or challenges. These challenges are:

- **Visitor Protection.** Tourism surety assumes that security professionals and police will need to know how to protect visitors from locals who might seek to do them harm, from other visitors who may be in transit for the purpose of committing crime, and less than honest staff members. Finally, tourism surety seeks to protect the visitor from tourism professionals who may be willing to commit fraud or sell them a product that is defective.
- **Protection of Staff.** A tourism industry that does not care about its staff (workers) cannot long survive. The second aspect of a tourism surety program is to find ways to assure that honest staff members can work in an environment that is crime free and not hostile. Tourism is a high-pressured industry and it is all too easily for staff members to be abused or for tempers to flare leading to a hostile work situation.
- **Site Protection.** It is the responsibility of tourism surety specialists to protect tourism sites. The term site can mean anything from a place of lodging to an attraction site. While in an age of terrorism there are people whose purpose it is to destroy or harm a specific site; site protection must also take into account the careless traveler. Often, vacationers simply forget to care for furniture, appliances or equipment. Tourism surety then also takes into account the needs of cleaning staffs and hotel engineers and seeks to assure that site environment is both attractive and as secure/safe as possible.
- **Ecological Management.** Closely related to and yet distinct from site security is the protection of the area's ecology. No tourism entity lives in a vacuum. The care of a locale's streets, lawns, and internal environment has a major impact on tourism surety. Ecology, however, should not only be restricted to the physical; it also involves the cultural ecology. It behooves specialists

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in tourism surety to protect the cultural ecology of an area. Strong cultures tend to produce safe places. On the other hand, when cultures tend to die, crime levels may tend to rise. Protecting the cultural ecology along with the physical ecology of a locale is a major preventative step that tourism surety professionals can do to lower crime rates and to assure a safer and more secure environment.

- **Economic Protection.** Tourism is a major generator of income on both national and local levels. As such it is open to attack from various sources. For example, terrorists may see a tourism site as an ideal opportunity to create economic havoc. Criminals do not wish to destroy a tourism locale, but rather view that locale as an ideal "fishing" ground from which to harvest an abundance of riches. Tourists and visitors do not distinguish between the treatment they are afforded by the local travel and tourism industry and by people living and working in the community. As such, law enforcement agents and tourism security professionals have a special role in protecting the economic viability of a locale. How security professionals act and the methods that they use can reinforce the marketing department's message or undercut it.
- **Reputation Protection.** You only need to read the newspaper to note that crimes and acts of terrorism against tourism entities receive a great deal of media attention. The classical method of simply denying that there is a problem is no longer valid and is counter-productive to a tourism locale's best promotional efforts. When there is a lapse in tourism security, the effect is long term. Some of the consequences to a local's reputation include the locale's moving from upper to lower class clientele, the need to drop prices, the general deterioration of the site, and the need for a major marketing effort to counteract the negative reputation.

Because tourism is both a component industry and has a highly undefined population a Tourism Security unit must use a variety of methods. The chart below defines the various population types that need to be protected.

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Tourism Security radically challenges the paradigm of law enforcement. Among these changes are reflected in the following paradigmatic changes:

. Among the paradigm challenges that Tourism Security programs introduced are:

- Police successes reflect the number of citations issued rather in accident and crime reductions. Tourism Security units then tend to be proactive in fighting crime rather than reacting to criminal actions.
- Successes are to be measured by “non-events” rather than events. That is to say that is now became the task of a private and public security officers to prevent crime rather than react to crime.
- Security rather than being a necessary expense was now to be seen as a marketing tool that if used properly added to a community or attraction’s bottom line.
- Security officers were to be professionalized. They were no longer to be shifted from one area of expertise to another but rather their model was to be that of medicine in which physicians demonstrate high levels of specialization.
- Tourism security was seen as an integral part of the tourism experience and thus how its agents dressed, what they said and how they acted impacted the entire tourism structure
- Tourism security is part of the entire tourism system and a failure in security can cause system shut down or collapse.
- Tourism Security would encompass a far greater role than classical law enforcement. Thus, Tourism Security officers are expected to interact with other professionals in issues as diverse as food safety to port security, from lost children and festival planning to traffic control and counter-terrorism

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Tourism Populations by Sociological Transience

Population type	Populations consistency
Visitors	Highly changeable and therefore transient
Frontline workers in tourism	Less changeable, but open to high levels of employee turn-over
Local businesses serving tourism industry	Higher levels of stability, low owner turn over
Festival attendees	Highly transient (by the hour)
Festival workers	Present only for festival duration
University Students	Actions similar to transient populations but physically present for stable (semester) periods of time
Cruise lines	Cruise line passengers are short term visitors, however cruise ships also need special protection and become an integral part of port security

As such Tourism Security recognizes the need to protect three distinct populations. These are

- Visitors to locale
- Frontline people working in the tourism industry such as hotel workers
- People who earn their living from the tourism industry, such as storeowners whose business are located in tourism zones.

A Police Department must protect a large number of city festivals and sporting events, leisure visitors, business visitors, diplomats, and college students who act as tourists.

Recognizing the above needs, a Tourism Security unit would have the following objectives. Below each objective a measurement tool is provided so as to determine the success of each objective.

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1. Provide a visual presence of Tourism Security police officers within tourism zones and at city's festivals. Such a visual presence is essential in the protection not only of people and property but also in the protection of the city's reputation and economy. The objective would then be to raise awareness of law enforcement in these areas with the objective of increasing the perception of security.

To measure the success of such presence, a tourism security professionals must:

- Meet with local store owners to determine their needs and if these needs are being met
 - Provide random surveys at the airport /seaport(use of 1-k survey type) after major events and/or festivals
 - Work with local Convention and Visitor bureau (CVB) to develop a sample of visitor security attitudes in the city's tourism zones
2. Decrease Festival Crimes. This objective recognizes that festivals are open to a number of different types of crimes. These crimes may be committed both by festival attendees against the festival (such as pilferage, shoplifting, and public disorders) and against the festival itself.

Tourism Security unites measure success rates by

1. Careful keeping of reported crime statistics
 2. Exit interviews with festival attendees
 3. Post festival analysis with festival organizers
3. Provide training and a sense of security to tourism frontline workers. To accomplish this goal, a Tourism Security unit should hold annual security reviews for hoteliers and their staffs. To avoid a Mumbai-like problem where police did not know the layout of principle

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hotels and attraction police officers will also be given FAM (familiarization tours) of all tourism sites, from hotels to local attractions

Measurements will be accomplished through examination to determine if police officers know the site layout, and to determine their level of risk readiness

4. Protection of Long-term transient populations such as students. The realization of this goal would entail cooperation with university officials. Its goal would be to reduce crimes against university students and disturbances caused by university students against the non-transient community.

Measurement of success would be accomplished through a questionnaire distributed to residents and business owners, an interview process and with regular meetings between tourism officials and Tourism Security unit

5. Protection of City' Reputation. This is the hardest goal to measure and yet it may be one of the most important goals. Methodologies would entail Tourism Security officers aiding the local CVB to attract conventions, the development of a highly trained Tourism Security unit, and major publicity of such a unit. Measurement would be accomplished by
 - Selected surveys of visitors
 - Selected survey of hoteliers
 - Selected surveys of travel magazine editors and media coverage
6. The Development of a port security for cruise ship passengers. Cruise ship passengers are not only potential victims of crimes of distraction such as pick-pocketing and purse snatching, but cruise ships are a potential terrorism threat. A Tourism Security unit would be responsible to work with other government protection agencies to assure both passenger security and cruise ship security.

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Measurement would occur in a number of ways. These include random surveys of cruise ship passengers, detailed meetings with cruise line representatives and interviews with the ship's senior staff members.

It should be noted that in all cases, a Tourism Security unit would expect that proportional crime figures would decrease. That the proportion of crimes out of the total number of tourist hours spent in any tourism location should decrease. Due to the variations in the tourism product and the ever-increasing number of short-term visitations, the standard of measurement will have to be tourism hours. The one exception to this rule is that of college students who would be measured in tourism days.

A good tourism security program then is much more than simply hiring a few extra guards. While tourism security programs do not promise that nothing can or will happen, they do lessen the risk of negative events and prepare a locale to minimize negative effects should an incident occur.

Best Practices in Tourism Security

Common problems

Interviews with spokesmen for law enforcement agencies from around the world indicate certain common problems. Among the major problems are:

- Lack of finances. Law enforcement agencies interviewed stated that despite the importance of tourism to their local economy, city, state, provincial, or national governments did not provide the agencies with the proper level of funding. There was a common perception that governments want tourists to receive extraordinary services within the confines of

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ordinary budgets. Often law enforcement agents suffer from low morale due in part to low pay and lack of resources.

- Manpower shortages. Police departments indicated that increasing manpower is a major way to prevent crime. However, due to budget constraints, and in the case of the USA, federal regulations regarding compt time, efforts by police departments are limited.
- Lack of cooperation within the media. Law enforcement agencies state that the media find stories about crime a good way to sell newspapers or increase ratings. Often the media are insensitive to the damage done to a community and to an agency's morale when only negative news items are reported. Inaccurate reporting, destroys media credibility with law enforcement agencies.
- Need for greater community cooperation. Law enforcement agencies cannot completely end crime. Instead, they must depend on the local population, and the tourism industry in particular, to help them fight crime prior to the occurrence of an incident. Law enforcement agencies see prevention as their best tool.
- Poor statistics and a lack of standardization. Currently there is no international standardization of what is a crime against a visitor, who a visitor is, or how records are to be kept. Law enforcement agencies are well aware that the industry does not always report crimes and that often the statistics lack credibility.

Common solutions and methodologies

Interviews also revealed that tourism communities share some common methodologies. Among these are:

- High police visibility. Law enforcement agencies push for law enforcement officers to be visible. The traveling public is better protected by police officers on foot, on horseback, or on a bicycle rather than in a car.

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- Police officers who are willing to talk to strangers. Tourism areas need extroverted officers who understand that part of their job is to "shmooz" with their community's guests. These informal conversations not only permit the police to have a better idea about what is on the person's mind, but create the perception that the community is safe enough for the police officer to have the time to talk with an out-of-towner.
- Pro-active participation on tourism boards. By working with local hotel/motel associations, CVBs, and Chambers-of-Commerce, law enforcement agencies can develop joint programs to stop crime before it begins.

Some of the most useful programs are:

- √ Visible policing. Law enforcement in tourism cities takes the position that there is a direct negative correlation between the number of police on the street and the amount of crime that takes place in a particular neighborhood.
- √ Coordination on a national level and help from national law enforcement agencies. South Africa is ahead of the US in realizing that often crime must be dealt with on a national or state/provincial basis rather than merely at the local level. Pockets of criminals just outside of a community's limits will not hesitate to attack tourists. Furthermore, a crime committed within a community's tourism radius may be presented in the media as if it had taken place within that community.
- √ Property inspections with minimal safety standards. The interviews reveal that hoteliers and owners of attractions can learn a great deal from local law enforcement agencies. Police are very concerned with such issues as old-fashioned numbered keys, and easy access doorways. From the law enforcement perspective, it may be easier to prevent a crime than to deal with it post facto.

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- √ Personnel checks. Interviews showed that people who work with tourists may have less than sterling backgrounds. Ray Wood of Orange County's Sheriff's office may have said it best, when speaking of his county's policy concerning crimes committed by hotel workers, he said: "if they get caught stealing from a guest, they are going to go to jail."
- √ Employee security training. Police forces encourage security training for anyone who works in places or areas frequented by tourists.
- √ Police tourism training. Police, who work in tourism areas, need to be sensitive to the special needs of the transient person. Sociologically it is known that tourists suffer from higher than normal levels of anomie, and are often "sitting ducks" for the criminal element. Police need to know how to comfort the tourist when he/she is a victim of a crime and how to help tourists so that they have a lower probability of becoming crime victims.
- Become part of the community. Law enforcement representatives noted that they alone cannot keep all citizens safe. Law enforcement agents recognize that they need the support of their community. Such innovative programs as national night-outs against crime, restaurant and bar taxi services, and inter-hotel and attraction crime alerts, all make the job of law enforcement easier.

Tourism Safety Brochures

Every community should have a security brochure. Include in this brochure basic safety features and emergency phone numbers. If you have not yet developed such a brochure for your community, here are some tips on how to design it and some points you may want to include in a tourism safety packet for your community.

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- **Use bright and cheerful colors.** While you want your tourists to be safe, you also do not want them to be afraid. Use clear and easy to read fonts placed on a background of colors that are upbeat and encouraging. Design these guides so as the reader receives the subtext that although caution is critical, your community is still a safe and fun place to visit.

- **Teach tourist to avoid overly-structuring their activities.** Emphasize that vacations are a time for spontaneity. The reason for this emphasis is that criminals often go after the predictable traveler. For example, if someone plays tennis every day at 3:00 p.m. it is much easier to rob his/her room than that of the guest who staggers his/her playing times.

- **Teach tourists to be observant.** Most tourists simply leave their hotel/motel room without ever noticing who may be in the area. Tourists should remember that it is always a wise idea to take note of anyone who may be suspicious.

- **Advise tourists about neighborhoods.** Your out-of-town guests do not know your community. Tourists do not know where choke points (areas such as construction sites and busy intersections) are located. These points are often places where the tourist is most vulnerable. Tourists do not know what is "ordinary" in a neighborhood or what to look for.

- **Encourage your visitors to always drive with the windows rolled up and with their car doors locked.** This safety tip is important for locals who are familiar with the community; it is essential for out-of-towners.

- **Encourage guests to avoid discussing their travel plans in public places.** Surveillants consider staff-personnel (and children) to be a prime source of information. The more the criminal knows about a particular tourist the easier it is to make that tourist a victim.

- **Develop with your local police department and Hotel/Motel Association a security rating system.** Most police departments are happy to help a local HMA develop an overall security plan.

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Once the plan is written, ask your HMA to accredit its members as to security readiness. Such a program helps both hoteliers and guests

- **Research demonstrates that the higher the level of general crimes in an area, the higher the levels of crimes against tourists.** Though specific attacks against tourists do happen, it is rare for tourists to be singled out for violent crime. Instead most violent crimes against tourists take place when the tourist, either through ignorance or thoughtlessness, wanders into the wrong neighborhood. Develop special maps that highlight the safest routes to and from major attractions.
- **When new hotels are being constructed, emphasize CPTED:** "Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design" is a very successful crime fighting method. For example, ask if your locale's hotels have physical boundaries, what type of lighting do they use , how safe are their parking areas? When building a new hotel, install clearly visible security cameras, electronic locks, etc.
- **It is the responsibility of the hotelier to think of possible criminal and terrorist acts and then take proper precautions.** Innkeepers are subject to the "*Principle of Foreseeability*," meaning that it is their legal responsibility to foresee a possible act of violence against their guests. The same is true of the principle of "*Infra hospitum*" in which it is the duty of the innkeeper to protect his/her guests in hallways, elevators, parking garages etc. Unless the property advises against the ordering of foods etc, the proprietors are responsible for the acts of private vendors or delivery services.

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